

2005 Report of Accomplishments

Walla Walla County Conservation District



Natural Resource Improvements in 2005 – Summary

- Construction is underway on our fourth Irrigation Efficiency project.
- The District helped landowners install an additional 33 fish screens to protect endangered species.
- Under the CREP program over 200 riparian acres were restored, for a program total of 2443 acres and 157 stream miles of buffers. (Picture to right shows project in its fourth year.)
- The District has secured Salmon Recovery funding for two projects to remove fish passage barriers.



Mission of the Walla Walla County Conservation District

- WWCCD is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of the natural resources of Walla Walla County, facilitated by working on a voluntary basis with landowners to identify opportunities and create solutions, while consistently providing education, information, and assistance whenever possible.

Salmon Recovery Projects

- The District secured funding to address two fish passage barriers.
 - The goal of the Gose Street Bridge project is to improve an older structure to allow adult and juvenile passage during times of low flow. Construction is projected to begin in summer of 2006.
 - Improvements at the Hofer Dam irrigation diversion will allow for adult salmonid migration and safe passage for juveniles migrating downstream. The design and engineering phase of this project is underway with construction planned for 2006.

Water Quality Implementation

- Water Quality funds were used to leverage state funds to ensure the success of district programs.
 - Emergency drought response funds helped fund seminars to provide water saving information to area irrigators.
 - The now completed Sediment Reduction program helped producers adopt low-disturbance tillage which reduced sediment transfer to area waterways at a rate of 342 tons per year for enrolled acres and promoted the adoption of low-disturbance tillage.
 - Water Quality funds provided program matching funds for the Screening program.

Basic Funding

- Basic Funding dollars made it possible for the District to provide services to landowners and our conservation partners. For example, we are actively engaged in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program with NRCS. Our role is to co-lead the Local Work Group and assist in producer sign-ups. There is over \$1,000,000.00 earmarked for the Snake River Region—federal dollars that will flow directly into the local economy if area landowners participate. Basic Funding makes it possible for the District to participate in and promote programs like these.

Irrigation Efficiencies

- Our recently completed third project saves over one cubic foot per second in Mill Creek. This represents water left in the river to directly benefit the endangered fish species in the basin: both Steelhead and Bull Trout.
 - 140 acres have been converted to efficient pivot irrigation
 - One and a half miles of water-wasting open ditch has been converted to buried pipe.
- Our three irrigation efficiencies projects save nearly 13 cubic feet per second, and this water has been placed in the Trust program to maintain flows in the Walla Walla River.

- Our next irrigation efficiency project will convert 178 acres of water-wasting flood irrigation to pivot and hand-line irrigation. This project will save 257 acre feet of water annually which will be placed in the State's Trust Water Rights program. All preliminary work is complete and installation has begun.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- Under the CREP program, we added over 210 acres of buffers bringing our program total to 2443 acres.
- Native grasses and over 126,000 trees and shrubs were planted. Our state funds of \$71,500.00 for new buffer installation matched federal funds of over \$715,000.00.
- The District provided maintenance for over 2443 acres of riparian forest buffers, following NRCS standards to ensure plant survival during the first two critical years following installation.

Water-Conservation

- We are currently completing the design for a project that will convert 5.4 miles of open ditch to closed pipeline for the Lowden 2 Irrigation District. This project was funded through a special appropriation for conveyance infrastructure improvement.

Family Farm Programs: Livestock, Screen, and Meter Programs

- Early indications point to a great deal of interest in small livestock projects to protect water quality. District staff have received training in producing farm plans to assist landowners implement these projects.
- All irrigators are required to install an approved fish screen. Our screening program has provided cost-share to install 240 WDFW-approved fish screens. In addition, we have completed 400 screen assessments and 300 screen designs.
- Irrigators are also required to install water meters to comply with state regulations. Under our metering program, we have provided cost share to install 115 water meters, with plans to assist landowners install 50 more meters this fall.

Community Collaboration & Coordination

- The District is involved in multiple endangered species planning forums representing area stakeholders. These planning forums include Bi-State Habitat Conservation Planning, Walla Walla Watershed Planning, Snake River Salmon Recovery Planning and Walla Walla Sub-basin Planning.
- The District runs the burn-permit program in cooperation with Walla Walla County and DOE.

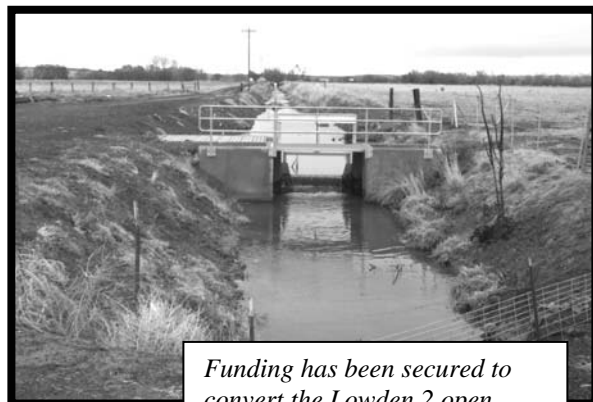
Information & Education

- We compiled the county yearly rainfall data, a service highly valued by area producers.
- We assisted local entities in preparation of 8 applications for SRFB funding.
- We published three newsletters with a circulation of over 1,200.
- We operated a fair booth to support NRCS in the upcoming CSP program and promote the Livestock and Irrigation Efficiency programs.

Washington Conservation Districts--assisting land managers with their conservation choices



Landowners learn about alternate crops and bio-diesel at the 2005 Annual Meeting.



Funding has been secured to convert the Lowden 2 open irrigation ditch to buried pipeline.